



# Administration on Aging

Honor the Past, Imagine the Future: Towards a Society for All Ages

Today, one in every six Americans, or 44 million people, is 60 years of age or older. While most older Americans are active members of their families and communities, others are at risk of losing their independence. These include four million Americans aged 85 and older, and persons who are frail and live alone without a caregiver.

One federal agency - the Administration on Aging (AoA) in the Department of Health and Human Services - is dedicated exclusively to policy development, planning, and the delivery of supportive home and community-based services to our nation's diverse population of older Americans and their caregivers. AoA also provides critical information and assistance and programs that protect the rights of vulnerable, at-risk older persons through the Older Americans Act of 1965.

## **Home and Community-Based Services**

**Access services** - Information and assistance; outreach; transportation and case management

**Caregiver services** - respite; adult day care; counseling and education. AoA also works to assist older persons with Alzheimer's Disease and supports caregivers by improving coordination between health care and social service systems

**Community Services** - congregate meals; senior center activities; adult day care; nursing home ombudsman services; elder abuse prevention; legal services; employment and pension counseling; health promotion; and fitness programs

**In-Home Services** - home-delivered meals; chores; home repair; modifications and rehabilitation; homemaker/home health aides; and personal care

Working in close partnership with its sister agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services and throughout the Executive branch of government, AoA leads a national aging network which includes AoA's central and regional offices, 57 state units on aging; 655 area agencies on aging; 223 tribal organizations representing 300 tribes; and thousands of service providers, senior centers, caregivers and volunteers.

## **Native Americans**

The Administration on Aging awards funds to 223 tribal organizations and one Native Hawaiian organization - representing more than 300 tribes across the United States - to assist older American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians.

Native Americans in general — and older Native Americans in particular — are among the most disadvantaged groups in the country. AoA's support provides home and community-based services in keeping with the cultural heritage and specific needs of each person receiving assistance.

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### **Consumer Information and Protection**

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Empowering older persons and their family members throughout their life course is a critical component of AoA's consumer information and protection role. AoA funded programs link people to available services, protect the rights of the vulnerable and at-risk, offer education about ways to detect and prevent elder abuse and consumer fraud, and provide opportunities for older persons to enhance their health. The Eldercare Locator, a national toll-free service helps callers find necessary, convenient services and resources in their own communities or throughout the country; and Insurance, Benefits and Pension Counseling Programs assist older Americans to access their pensions and make informed insurance and health care choices. AoA also has an award-winning website (<http://www.aoa.gov>) with information for older persons, their families,

professionals and organizations involved in aging programs, which is widely used by the general public.

AoA's elder rights protection programs also include the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, which investigates and resolves complaints made by or on behalf of residents of nursing, board and care, and similar adult care homes. The training of thousands of paid and volunteer long term care ombudsmen, insurance counselors, and other professionals who assist with spotting and reporting fraud and abuse in nursing homes and other settings is funded by AoA, along with programs that recruit and train retired professionals, such as doctors, nurses, attorneys, accountants and law enforcement personnel to serve as health care "fraud busters."

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### **Preparing for the Future - Towards a New American Century**

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A major priority for AoA has been raising the public's awareness about the importance of preparing now for a long and productive life giving special attention to increasing good health behaviors, and financial and consumer literacy.

In recognition of humankind's coming of age and the promise which the longevity revolution holds for social, economic, cultural

and spiritual development in the next century, the United Nations General Assembly has designated 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons (IYOP). The Administration on Aging serves as the focal point and convenor of agencies within the federal government for collaborative efforts to advance an aging policy and program agenda for the new millennium.

**For more information about the Administration on Aging, please contact:**

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